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BULGARIAN UKASE AND REGULATION ON NAMES OF CITIZENS

[Comment: The following Ukase No 43, published 16 June 1953, outlines the modification of the law on names. Information from Regulation No 822 on names of citizens, published 22 February 1953, is added in brackets when such information clarifies the ukase. Although the ukase and the regulation clarify to some extent the present situation in regard to Bulgarian names, confusion still exists because complete uniformity has not yet been achieved.

For example, the regulation allows a choice in the last name to be used: it may be either the last name of the person's father or the first name of his grandfather (i.e., the father's patronymic). Unless there is an error of statement in the regulation (i.e., in the use of "first name"), it is likely that last names will change with each generation. The increase of the more common names (e.g., Ivanov, from Ivan; Petrov, from Petur, and Dimitrov, from Dimitur), which already exist in great numbers, would result in complications in census lists and other official documents.

A married person may either retain his (or her) unmarried last name, or may use as his (or her) married last name the patronymic or last name (depending on which has been in use) of his (or her) spouse.

Many well-known Bulgarians use only a first name and a patronymic, the latter serving as a last name. Therefore, unless three names are given (on official lists of prize-winners or of dignitaries at important functions), it is impossible to know whether the last name used is the actual last name of the person or his patronymic. For example, in the case of Col Gen Ivan Mikhaylov, the patronymic serves as his last name, his full name being Col Gen Ivan Mikhaylov Popov. Premier Vulko Chervenkov, on the other hand, uses his first and last name only (his full name being Vulko Volov Chervenkov).7

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Article 6 of the Law on Names reads as follows: "Each person has a name which consists of a first name (sobstveno ime), a middle name (prezime), and a last name (semeyno ime). The middle name may be the name of one of his (or her) parents or of his (or her) spouse; and the last name may be the middle name of one of his (or her) parents or of his (or her) spouse."

This article is amended to read as follows: "Each person has a name which consists of a first name, a patronymic (bashtinsko ime), and a last name. Three names are written on his birth certificate."

The first name is the name given the person at birth. The patronymic is the first name of his (or her) father. The last name is based on the name of the paternal grandfather.

The family name or last name of a person is the first name [sic] of his paternal grandfather or the family name (ime na roda) of his father, depending on how the father is known in society. Birth certificates which were made out before this regulation and on which the patronymic and last name are not entered according to the above-mentioned regulation must be corrected.

The patronymic and last name of an illegitimate child are the first and last names of the father, provided the child is adopted through recognition by the father or through a court decision. If the child is not adopted, he takes the name of his mother.

The name of an illegitimate child without established paternity consists of his first name and the first and last names of his mother.

An adopted person may take the first and last names of the person adopting him as his patronymic and last name. This must be mentioned on adoption papers."

For adoptions made before this regulation, each party, with the consent of the other, must petition to mention on the adoption papers that the adopted person will use the patronymic and last name of the person adopting him.

If the adoption is revoked, the person adopted may not use the name of the person who adopted him if the latter objects.

In Article 28, which states that "on a marriage certificate, each of the parties must declare whether he will use the middle and last name of his partner," the words "middle and last name of his partner" are replaced with the words "patronymic or last name of his partner."

On marriage certificates, each partner keeps his first name and patronymic and declares whether he (or she) will keep his (or her) former last name or will take as his (or her) last name the patronymic or last name of his (or her) partner, depending on how the latter is known in society.

When this declaration is missing, the partners keep their original last names. If necessary, however, each may later take the last name of his (or her) partner after first notifying the court.

The following is an example of correct usage: Suppose the wife's name to be Mariya Mikhaylova Petrova, and the husband's name to be Ivan Draganov Popov. Formerly, the wife declared that she would use the name Mariya Ivanova Popova, thus losing her patronymic. This irregularity must be corrected so that her name will be Mariya Mikhaylova Popova.

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After divorce, each partner may resume use of his former last name. He may continue to use his partner's last name only with the latter's consent.<sup>7</sup>

Article 127 reads as follows: "Upon the petition of the parties concerned, the okoliya court may order errors in civil status (*grazhdansko sustoyanie*) documents corrected."

This is amended to read as follows: "Errors in civil status documents are corrected through a decision of the people's court."

Article 127 continues as follows: "A name (first name, patronymic, or last name) may be changed only when the petitioner wishes to change a ridiculous, dishonored, or generally inappropriate name."

This is amended to read as follows: "A change of first name, patronymic, or last name is permitted by the people's court only when the name is ridiculous, dishonored, or generally inappropriate or when other important considerations make a change advisable."

<sup>7</sup>A person who has two first names may declare within 6 months of the publication of this regulation which name he will keep. If no declaration is made, the second (later) name is considered official. The birth certificate is changed accordingly.

The prefixes "khadzhi," "pop," "kara," "deli," and others before a patronymic or last name are combined and written with the name following (e.g., Khadzhistoyanov, Popnikolov, Karaslavov, and Deliradev).

When a person is known in society by a pseudonym, he may add it to his name. It may be put on a birth certificate only through a decision of the people's court.<sup>7</sup>

Paragraph 2 of Article 81, which states that "the adopted person may take the name of the person adopting him" is revoked.

Name changes of persons heretofore adopted are permitted by the people's court in accordance with already established rules. Changes of individual signatures in civil status documents and family records according to the conditions established in this ukase and details about attendant circumstances are confirmed by a ruling of the Ministry of Justice, which is approved by the Council of Ministers. This ukase is under jurisdiction of the Ministry of Justice.

<sup>7</sup>Petitions for changing patronymics or last names on civil status documents drawn up before this regulation must be filed within 6 months of the publication of the regulation, at the people's soviet which has jurisdiction over the petitioner, for delivery to the person responsible for civil matters in the people's soviet which drew up the document.<sup>7</sup>

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